

Louisa Adams,  
Daughter of John Quincy Adams,  
1811-1812

If her distinguished father eventually  
returned to America after being sent  
as its minister to the Russian Empire

during the time of Napoleon's thrust to  
Moscow from which soldiers on both  
foes' sides died on the battlegrounds

before his folly was crushed, fate was  
no less sinister with the diplomat's sole  
daughter, extinguishing her flame while

she was just an infant and leaving but  
a tiny casket behind as a husk to rust,  
alone in an ocean of foreigners among

the burial mounds of St. Petersburg.

Yet proof she was not forgotten by her  
family then and those later begotten lies  
in the quest, realized two hundred years

after at their behest, to hew into a stone  
her appellation and lifespan counted away  
from home to pave in longevity a child's

passage despite its earthly brevity, if not  
to undo, then at least to lighten the sentient  
bones of the descendants of her progenitor

for whom her candle once burnt brightly  
with such allure and the signal promise  
a longer while to endure and accompany

her forebear on his path as history stirred.